

## **Appendix H: Transcript of Public Scoping Meeting - Fresno, California, January 15, 2002**

STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES  
PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING  
NORTH-OF-THE-DELTA OFFSTREAM STORAGE  
PICADILLY INN - UNIVERSITY 4961 N. CEDAR  
FRESNO, CALIFORNIA  
  
TUESDAY, JANUARY 15, 2002  
6:00 P.M.

## PROCEEDINGS

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FACILITATOR BUCHHOLZ: Good evening. My name is Gwen Buchholz, and I'm your Facilitator tonight.

The purpose of being here today is that we're here for the Scoping Report. We're starting the scoping process with the development of the environmental documentation for North-of-the-Delta Offstream Storage.

We are here for several reasons, as part of the scoping process. It's a process under CEQA and NEPA to develop an Environmental Impact Report under the Department of Water Resources, an Environmental Impact Statement under Bureau of Reclamation, and also documents off of the Programmatic EIR/EIS.

Our purpose tonight is to notify you of the intent of developing this environmental document, and to get your ideas on alternatives that should be considered in this document, and issues that need to be evaluated in detail. We also are here to develop a mailing list, and so, again, I

think all of you have signed up on the mailing list, the sign-in sheet, but if you haven't, please do so, because that's our basis of developing a mailing list for future meetings.

Today with us, we have several people with us. We have Sean Sou, who's the Project Manager for the Department of Water Resources; Donna Garcia, manager for the Bureau of Reclamation on this project. We have B.G. Heiland from the Department of Water Resources; Scott Woodland, and Jim Wicking, from the Department of Water Resources.

We will be recording this, all of our comments today. We would like to do a small presentation, short presentation to discuss the basis of the project, which is really a summary of what the information was in the Notice of Preparation and Notice of Intent, that was published in November of 2001. We'd like to have you hold your questions and comments until we're finished with the presentation. But that way, then we will be preparing our -- getting the comments directly onto the recordings, so we can make sure that they're included in their entirety in the Scoping Report, which will be prepared following the close of the scoping period.

We also ask -- we'll get the comment cards, and we'll be using those so we can record your name and -- for the comment period after the presentation.

So at this point in time I'd like to have Sean present the short presentation and discussion of the project.

MR. SOU: Thank you, Gwen, and good evening, everyone. Thank you for coming to our Scoping Meeting. Just a reminder that this is North-of-the-Delta, Sacramento Valley Storage Project, and not the San Joaquin River Project.

In order to introduce North-of-the-Delta Offstream Storage, I will describe North-of-the-Delta or the Sacramento River region and the Sacramento River, the CALFED program, the North-of-the-Delta Offstream Storage program, the North-of-the-Delta Offstream Storage Planning Partnership, the environmental documentation processes, and public participation in this process.

The water resources of the Sacramento River region support over 2.5 million people and associated industries, over two million acres of farmland, and also supports 200,000 acres of marsh and agricultural farmland for waterfowl, which supports about 60 percent of the total duck and goose population in the Pacific Flyway. And, of course, supporting flows for riverine habitat. The total regional needs are projected to increase in the future.

The Sacramento River region, as shown on this map here, covers the drainage area of the Sacramento River and its tributaries. It covers roughly from the Oregon border in the north, to about Collinsville in the Delta, roughly 300 miles. At the same time, the Sacramento River and its tributaries make up the largest and most important riverine ecosystem in California.

These factors combined have brought us a number of challenges facing the region. Those challenges include users are subjected to shortages in both average and drought years, and that a number of species dependent on the riverine ecosystem are being designated as threatened or endangered. And the Sacramento River provides 80 percent of the inflow to the Delta, supporting both Delta ecosystem and Delta diversions.

These often competing demands on this limited resource has brought us to the point where operation and management of the system are becoming increasingly inflexible due to increase in water use within the region, Delta diversions and exports, and increase in recognition of environmental water needs.

Meanwhile, in May of 1995, CALFED began to develop a long-term comprehensive plan to restore ecological health and improve water management of the Bay-Delta system. The CALFED program is a collaborative effort involving, or including representatives of the agricultural, urban, environmental, business, fishery, tribal and local interests. And the CALFED programs are coordinated with local leadership, with an emphasis on regional solutions.

In the summer of 2000, CALFED published a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement and Report, and a Record of Decision with an action specific long-term plan. The CALFED solution area covers six regions, including all the region of interest of Sacramento River region.

CALFED has four program objective, basically. The four objectives are improved water supply reliability; improved ecosystem quality; provide or improve water quality; and improve levee and channel integrity to reduce risks associated with catastrophic failure of the Delta levees.

And in order to achieve those program objectives, CALFED has eight program elements, including storage component, which is our focus for the North-of-the-Delta Offstream Storage program, although all of the other components or elements will be affected somewhat by a North-of-the-Delta Offstream Storage.

In the Record of Decision, CALFED agencies concluded that storage can be used to help achieve the CALFED objectives, and more specifically that storage is critical to the successful implementation of all aspects of the CALFED program, and that storage provides much needed system flexibility.

Also the Record of Decision identifies Sites Reservoir, which is a North-of-the-Delta Offstream Storage alternative, as one of five surface storage projects statewide for continued evaluation. The other four of the surface storage projects that are needing investigation are Shasta enlargement, the Los Vaqueros expansion, in Delta storage, and the San Joaquin storage.

Consistent with the National Environmental Policy Act, the California Environmental Quality Act, and Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, the Department and its partners will evaluate Sites Reservoir and a reasonable range of alternatives.

Concurrent with the North-of-the-Delta Offstream Storage program, these are some of the other programs in the Sacramento Valley that are ongoing. Those programs include Sacramento Valley Water Management Agreement (Phase 8 Settlement Agreement); the Sacramento Valley Basinwide Management Plan; the CALFED Ecosystem Restoration Program; the Sacramento River Conservation Area, also known as Senate Bill 1086;

Sacramento/San Joaquin River Basins Comprehensive Study; and other CALFED Stage 1 surface and groundwater storage programs.

In the Record of Decision also identifies specific objectives for North-of-the-Delta Offstream Storage project. And those objectives include to enhance water management flexibility in the Sacramento Valley; reduce diversions, water diversions on the Sacramento River during critical fish migration periods; increase reliability of supplies for a significant portion of the Sacramento Valley; and, of course, provide storage and operational benefits for other CALFED programs such as water quality and the Environmental Water Account.

In order to understand how North-of-the-Delta Offstream Storage affects the current system, as well as how those objectives for North-of-the-Delta Offstream Storage will be accomplished, it is helpful to do a comparison of the system with and without an offstream storage. This is a simplified graphic representing the current system, with a number of important Water Resources facilities including Shasta Reservoir; Oroville Reservoir; Folsom Reservoir; the Sacramento River, Feather, and the American Rivers; and the Sacramento/San Joaquin Delta.

In the following slides we'll focus in on this area that's outlined here on the northern Sacramento Valley there. This graphic indicates the current operation without an offstream storage, focusing in on the two major water users of the Sacramento River, the Tehama-Colusa Canal and the Glenn-Colusa Irrigation District Canal. During the wintertime, when flows in the river are relatively high, as indicated by this thicker line representing the Sacramento River, diversions to these canals are relatively low, as indicated by the thinner canal lines.

Again, on current operation without an offstream storage in the summertime, now there's a greater, much greater demand, agricultural demand in these two service areas in the summertime. So diversions to these canals are relatively high, while flow in the river is relatively low during the summer.

Now, operation with an offstream storage. During the wintertime, when flow in the river is relatively high, we can divert water into an offstream storage either from the Sacramento River or its tributaries. Our depiction of this bucket here, it's really -- this bucket here depicts any type of a storage. Now, the current operation with an offstream storage in the summertime, now there's a greater demand in these service areas. With an offstream storage, with water stored in an offstream storage in the wintertime, we now have an alternative source of water to meet these demands.

With an offstream storage, we can provide partial delivery to these canals, these water users in these two canals. And at the same time, with an offstream storage, we can improve the water supply reliability of these canals, these water users in these areas, as well as reduce water diversions from the river during critical fish migration periods.

Now, let's look back at the bigger system, the larger system. With an offstream storage, as a matter of fact, with an offstream storage operation, preliminary operation studies indicate that with an offstream storage operation for the current system, we can provide a significant water management flexibility to the system. And more specifically, if we can get water from an offstream storage we can improve storage in Shasta Reservoir, in Oroville Reservoir, and Folsom Reservoir, as well. And with water storage, an offstream storage, we can even improve locally managed groundwater storage.

In summary, North-of-the-Delta Offstream Storage can provide opportunities for other benefits for other CALFED programs, including Delta water quality and the environmental water account. North-of-the-Delta Offstream Storage provides an opportunity for balanced solutions with ecosystem benefits, environmental water use, agricultural water use, municipal water use, and industrial water use.

In the CALFED Record of Decision, two milestones or steps were identified. The first milestone was established to create a partnership local water interests, and the second step or

milestone was to complete the environmental review and planing documentation by August 2004.

For the first milestone, a Memorandum of Understanding was created with local partnership, local water interests, and to date there are 11 local water interests who have signed the Memorandum of Understanding for joint planning. And there are five CALFED agencies, including three federal and two state.

The federal agencies, including Bureau of Reclamation, which is represented by Donna Garcia here, they are the CALFED's lead agency for compliance with the National Environmental Quality -- Policy Act, excuse me. And then Department of Water Resources is the state agency represented, which is the lead agency for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act.

The second milestone in the Record of Decision identifies that -- specifies that the Department of Water Resources and Bureau of Reclamation and the partnership will prepare a site specific Environmental Impact Report and Statement. It will be based on the final, CALFED final programmatic Environmental Impact Statement and Report, where appropriate. And one other major planning effort that's concurrently going on right now is the engineering feasibility studies.

The Notice of Preparation and Notice of Intent are really the first formal steps for the environmental planning processes. For the North-of-the-Delta Offstream Storage program, the Notice of Preparation was filed with the State Clearinghouse on November 5th, 2001, and the Notice of Intent was also filed with the Federal Register on November of 2001.

Listed in the Notice of Preparation are a list of possible project alternatives. Those include no project, present condition; no action, future condition; Sites Reservoir alternative; and Newville Reservoir alternative, and other possible alternatives that may come out of the scoping process. But other possible alternatives include a conjunctive use and Shasta enlargement.

Now, this is where your comments are most helpful to us. Specifically, what we're asking from scoping meetings is are there other alternatives associated with North-of-the-Delta Offstream Storage that we should investigate, that we should consider in our evaluation. And also, are there specific effects that we should -- associated with the alternatives, that we should evaluate in our evaluation.

So as far as scoping meetings, we have three scoping meetings scheduled. We had one in Sacramento, one in Maxwell, and then tonight we're at the one in Fresno. So after the scoping, we will prepare a Scoping Report to summarize the comments we received, and then carry on the alternatives we carry forward in the environmental documentation. We will then begin writing the Environmental Impact Statement and Report and the Clean Water Act analysis.

So the way that the people and public agencies can comment on is to attend scoping meetings and submit your comments either at the scoping meetings, such as tonight, or send it to our contact. I'll introduce Scott later on. After -- we ask that you submit your comments by the 25th of this month, and we ask, again, the comments we're seeking are there other alternatives that we should be looking at, and the alternatives that we have outlined earlier in the Notice of Preparation, are there possible effects that -- to those alternatives that we should be considering, and are there alternatives that you want us to look at and the effects associated with those alternatives.

And, as part of the continuing outreach, we would -- there will be regular opportunities for the public to participate in the process. There will be regular outreach public meetings where the public can participate in the process.

So, finally, send your comments to Scott Woodland through either fax or regular mail. And Scott Woodland is in back of the room. He will be glad to take your comments. He has

business cards in the back of the room, and his name is also in the Notice of Preparation and all flyers, so feel free to send in your comments if you don't submit them tonight.

Thank you.

FACILITATOR BUCHHOLZ: Thank you. That concludes our formal part of the presentation. Again, as I said, we're going to be taking your comments, and they're being recorded. Transcripts of the recording, of the recording and comments received in all of the scoping meetings will be included in the final Scoping Report, as well as all of the letters from members of the public and other comments we receive during the -- that we receive during the scoping process.

And so at this point in time, I would ask that if you -- since we're doing the recording, if anybody wants to make a comment tonight, to please go up -- fill out the blue card that Jim and Scott will be passing out, and then we ask you to come up here to make your comments for the recording.

Does anybody have any comments to make tonight?

FROM THE AUDIENCE: Can we ask a question?

FACILITATOR BUCHHOLZ: If you'll --

MR. ROBERTS: It's not really a comment. Can we get a copy of what you put on the wall?

FACILITATOR BUCHHOLZ: Oh, I'm sorry. The copies of the --

MR. ROBERTS: The presentation --

FACILITATOR BUCHHOLZ: -- that will also be in the Scoping Report we prepare.

MR. ROBERTS: And can we get it in advance of --

FACILITATOR BUCHHOLZ: We're not making that available in advance right now, I'm sorry. And that information, though, let me just say this, is specifically -- was prepared based upon all of the information presented in the Notice of Intent and Notice of Preparation, and we do have copies of those here tonight.

MR. IGAWA: Can I ask another question? I don't have a comment, I have a question. In the presentation there was no indication of South of the Delta benefits. Is there a reason for that, or is that not --

FACILITATOR BUCHHOLZ: Well, I think that would be -- we might put that in part of our comments, recorded comments, if you don't mind, in the scoping meetings. One of the comments that -- I'll report that that's -- I think that's in the record, that we received a comment that the benefits that would be received South of the Delta be included in the analysis. Is that a correct interpretation?

Okay. Any other comments that should be included in our consideration? Any other questions off the record? You probably don't have any --

MR. IGAWA: I have another question. I was curious, if the balance is --

FACILITATOR BUCHHOLZ: I can't answer that, we're just starting, and then bringing together information. That's why we're asking for comments tonight. I mean, how -- one of the questions we're asking is how detailed should the analysis be, as far as the questions -- and I should also say there was a comment that the -- what the price of water would be for those -- the cost of water.

MR. IGAWA: It seems like you could do that part of that documentation at some point and later figure out the cost of water and other --

FACILITATOR BUCHHOLZ: Well, at this time, as we said in the presentation, we will be studying the environmental documentation all at the –

MR. ROBERTS: If you have offstream storage –

FACILITATOR BUCHHOLZ: That's what's out there in the comments. Right now we're trying to take those comments. If that's one of the comments it should be recorded. One of the comments –

MR. ROBERTS: Can I have anymore comments or questions, before I go –

FACILITATOR BUCHHOLZ: I think that's the real question. Maybe we can do that so we can get them recorded.

MR. ROBERTS: I'm Don Roberts, Madera Irrigation District. I'd like to know -- the question I guess is who's funding the study, the EIS.

FACILITATOR BUCHHOLZ: We're generally not responding to comments -- or questions, but I think that might be one, Sean, that we might want to respond to tonight, on who's funding the preparation of the environmental documentation.

MR. SOU: Well, I think this is a joint project with the Bureau and the State Department of Water Resources. So our funds at the Department of Water Resources comes from mostly General State funding.

MR. ROBERTS: Well, you mentioned there were 11 people in the MOU. Are they all part of the funding, or are they just –

MR. SOU: No, they're just a planning partnership right now. They don't provide the funding.

FACILITATOR BUCHHOLZ: We're generally not responding to questions, but I think that was an appropriate one.

Any other comments for the record? If there are no more comments, we're going to close the formal comment period. We will be accepting comments through January 25th. Please mail or fax them to Scott Woodland, and as Sean said, his cards are in the back of the room.

Thank you for your attendance, and make sure you sign up on the mailing list so we can notify you of future outreach meetings.

(Thereupon the Scoping Meeting was concluded at 6:29 p.m.)

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## **CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER**

I, PETER PETTY, an Electronic Reporter, do hereby certify: That I am a disinterested person herein; that the foregoing Department of Water Resources Public Scoping Meeting was reported by me and thereafter transcribed into typewriting.

I further certify that I am not of counsel or attorney for any of the parties in this matter, nor in any way interested in the outcome of this matter.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this

28th day of January, 2002.

Peter Petty

Official Reporter